

**Remarks of Governor Jim Doyle
Governor's Summit on After-School Programs
Tuesday, February 7, 2006**

Thank you for having me here today. I'd like to thank everyone involved in making today's Summit happen.

As the husband and son of educators I know that helping our kids learn is one of the most important things we can do. And with so many dedicated men and women in this state who care deeply about education, our kids' have a bright future.

To me, investing in our kids now to ensure their success in the future is a pretty basic concept. Maybe this is because I grew up in a family—and a state—that valued education above all else. It is only because of the sacrifices our parents and grandparents made that we have a quality education system in Wisconsin.

As Governor, I've made education a top priority—from restoring the state to two-thirds funding, to expanding 4-year-old kindergarten and SAGE programs, to proposing stronger standards for all students and an initiative—*The Wisconsin Covenant*—that will give all kids the opportunity to attend one of Wisconsin's great UW system schools.

But what happens after the school day can be as important as what happens during it. After-school programs help at-risk students improve their grades, give struggling students the one-on-one attention they need, and get parents, volunteers, and local leaders involved in students' lives.

And they help to keep kids safe and out of trouble. More than a third of Wisconsin's kids come from working families and are on their own after they get home from school. Working parents can't be there every minute their child isn't in school...and that's where programs like 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Safe & Sound, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and 4-H After-School Clubs come in. These programs not only improve student achievement, they give kids something to do in those critical afternoon hours.

Even as we're investing in education, the federal government is backing away. That means it's more important than ever to get engaged.

This is a big reason I made it a priority to restore two-thirds funding for our schools. Because I don't want to read another story about afterschool programs being eliminated. That should never happen in Wisconsin.

Through my *Community Connections* initiative, I've encouraged Wisconsin citizens to get involved in mentoring after-school programs, tutoring in reading or math, providing apprenticeships, or being a personal coach to a middle school student. My wife, Jessica, has been dedicated to this project and I thank her for her leadership.

And the Wisconsin Afterschool Network is an important part of a statewide effort to build and strengthen learning opportunities for our kids. Last year, Wisconsin received more than \$200,000 from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to support the Network in making high-after-school opportunities available for kids in every Wisconsin community. The Department of Public Instruction, the University of Wisconsin Extension, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families are leading the Network, and it's off to a great start.

But there is still a need for greater individual efforts and for more public-private partnerships to support after-school programs throughout the state.

One thing you can do today is fill out the commitment card in your folders—consider joining the Wisconsin Afterschool Network, supporting an after-school program in your community, volunteering your time, or serving as a mentor.

There is no greater obligation we have to make sure our kids get a great education...before school, during school, and after school. Let's work together to make this commitment to our kids.